

U.S. AIDE REPLIES TO ATOMIC CRITICS

Fisher Discounts Risk of
Soviet Test-Ban Cheating

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WASHINGTON, March 3—The Administration replied to Congressional criticism of its nuclear test-ban policy today with the argument that the risks of Russian "cheating" on such a treaty were much less than those from unlimited testing with no agreement.

Adrian B. Fisher, deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said that while the United States still enjoys nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, "the trend toward equality in the major nuclear forces between the U.S. and the U. S. S. R."

The immediate target of the rebuttal was Democratic Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut, who recently joined Republican critics in charging that treaty terms proposed by the Administration failed to provide minimum safeguards against clandestine Soviet testing.

The Republican leadership of the House of Representatives recently attacked the Administration for lowering its demand for international nuclear inspections inside Russia. Instead of 12 to 20 such inspections, the United States is now pressing for eight or 10.

'Hiding' Charged

The Republicans accused the Administration of hiding behind "a tripe curtain of classification, complexity and credibility."

Administration officials explained at the time that much of the test-detection data on which its modified position was based came from the secret monitoring system with which this country ringed the Soviet Union in the late 1940's. Operated by the Air Force Technical Operations Center, the location and techniques of the system have remained a closely guarded secret since that time.

In speeches and in a recent letter to The Washington Post, Senator Dodd argued that if the Russians continued testing in violation of an agreement and the United States did not, "they can confront us with a choice between surrender or annihilation."

Mr. Fisher said that this statement along with seven others made by the Connecticut Senator were "not correct." In a letter to the newspaper today, he said that to make significant advances in the field of small nuclear weapons, Russia would have to accept a period of

No Threat Envisioned

"Every analysis conducted by the executive branch in recent years has reached the conclusion that the strategic military balance between the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. could not be altered in any major way by such developments," Mr. Fisher said.

"The risk of undetected cheating would be present under any treaty. The type of treaty prepared by the United States would provide deterrents against Soviet attempts at undetected cheating, so that while such a risk must be recognized, on balance the security of the United States would be better served by taking this risk than taking the risk of continued unlimited testing with no agreement."

Other arguments by Senator Dodd and Mr. Fisher's rebuttals were substantially as follows:

Mr. Dodd—Continued testing by the United States is necessary for development of an anti-missile and of the "neutron bomb," a nuclear device that theoretically could destroy a city's population without destroying the city.

Mr. Fisher—Development of the anti-missile missile "does not rest primarily on nuclear weapons testing" but on other research, presumably guidance and control systems. Also, the chief interest of the United States is in preventing the Soviet and others from acquiring this type of weapon.

Superiority Debated

Mr. Dodd—The test-ban policy of both the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations "has already cost us our nuclear superiority over the Soviets."

Mr. Fisher—The United States has not lost its nuclear superiority over the U. S. S. R. but unlimited testing without an agreement could facilitate Soviet "equality" with the United States.

Mr. Dodd—Reduction in the number of detection stations and on site inspections means that proposed treaty safeguards would be "only one-tenth as effective as those in our original proposals."

Mr. Fisher—These reductions are justified by our scientific advances in detection equipment and studies on the number of unidentified earth shocks recorded annually in Russia. With this new knowledge, proposed safeguards would be as effective as the larger number originally proposed.

Mr. Dodd—Permitting the Russians to man their own monitoring stations would mean that they would "be the judges of whether or not they are cheating."

Mr. Fisher—This is not a correct statement. The United States and Britain would do their own monitoring, and information from Russian stations would be only supplemental.

Last night, William C. Foster, head of the Arms Control Agency and chief negotiator of the United States at the Geneva discussions, returned here. He expressed disappointment at having to report "no progress at all" toward a United States-Soviet agreement banning nuclear testing.